

IN THE CLAIMS

Please cancel claim 1, 14-15, 18-19, 21, and 26-28, without prejudice or disclaimer.

Please add new claims 29-53 as follows:

29. (new) A retractable cover for covering a structure, the retractable cover comprising:

a flexible material portion including:

a sheath housing forming a sheath; and

a first zipper disposed on the sheath housing;

securing means for securing the flexible material portion to the structure, with the securing means selected from the group consisting of:

a) stitching for sewing the flexible material to a portion of the structure;

b) a first hook system;

c) a first hook-and-pile fastener system;

d) a dome system;

e) a first buttoned system;

f) a screw;

g) a pin;

h) adhesive; and

i) welding;

biasing means positioned along an extendable length of the flexible material portion and disposed within the sheath, with the biasing means accessible in the sheath, with the biasing means retracting the flexible material portion from an extended state to a rolled-up state, and with the biasing means including:

a second zipper for removably attaching the biasing means to the first zipper on the sheath housing; and

a spring having a predetermined length relative to at least a predetermined extendable length of the flexible material portion; and

affixing means for affixing the flexible material portion in the extended state to the structure, wherein the affixing means is selected from the group consisting of:

- a) a second hook-and-pile fastener system;
- b) a second hook system;
- c) a second button system;
- d) a material tying fastener;
- e) a clip;
- f) a magnet; and
- g) a zipper.

30. (new) The retractable cover of claim 29, wherein the sheath housing is sewn onto the flexible material portion.

31. (new) The retractable cover of claim 29, wherein the zipper of the biasing means is a constant force spring.

32. (new) The retractable cover of claim 29, wherein the zipper of the biasing means is a variable force spring.

33. (new) The retractable cover of claim 32, wherein a retraction force of the variable force spring can be selected from a range of about 0.25 kg to about at least 50 kg as determined by one or more of at least the weight of the flexible material portion, the dimensions of the flexible material portion, and the structure to be covered.

34. (new) A retractable cover for covering a structure, the retractable cover comprising:

a flexible material portion including:

a sheath housing forming a sheath;

a first zipper disposed on the sheath housing; and

securing means for securing the flexible material portion to the structure,

with the securing means selected from the group consisting of:

a) stitching for sewing the flexible material to a portion of the structure;

b) a first hook system;

c) a first hook-and-pile fastener system;

d) a dome system;

e) a first buttoned system;

f) a screw;

g) a pin;

h) adhesive; and

i) welding;

biasing means positioned along an extendable length of the flexible material portion and disposed within the sheath, with the biasing means accessible in the sheath, with the biasing means retracting the flexible material portion from an extended state to a rolled-up state, and with the biasing means including:

a second zipper for removably attaching the biasing means to the first zipper on the sheath housing; and

a spring having a predetermined length relative to at least a predetermined extendable length of the flexible material portion; and

affixing means for affixing the flexible material portion in the extended state to the structure, wherein the affixing means is selected from the group consisting of:

- a) a second hook-and-pile fastener system;
- b) a second hook system;
- c) a second button system;
- d) a material tying fastener;
- e) a clip;
- f) a magnet; and
- g) a zipper.

35. (new) The retractable cover of claim 34, wherein the sheath housing is sewn onto the flexible material portion.

36. (new) The retractable cover of claim 34, wherein the zipper of the biasing means is a constant force spring.

37. (new) The retractable cover of claim 34, wherein the zipper of the biasing means is a variable force spring.

38. (new) The retractable cover of claim 37, wherein a retraction force of the variable force spring can be selected from a range of about 0.25 kg to about at least 50 kg as determined by one or more of at least the weight of the flexible material portion, the dimensions of the flexible material portion, and the structure to be covered.

39. (new) A retractable cover for covering a structure, with the structure including securing means selected from the group consisting of: stitching for sewing the flexible material to a portion of the structure, a first hook system, a first hook-and-pile fastener system, a dome system, a first buttoned system, a screw, a pin, adhesive, and welding, the retractable cover comprising:

a flexible material portion secured to the structure by the securing means on the structure, the flexible material portion including:

a sheath housing forming a sheath; and

a first zipper disposed on the sheath housing;

biasing means positioned along an extendable length of the flexible material portion and disposed within the sheath, with the biasing means accessible in the sheath, with the biasing means retracting the flexible material portion from an extended state to a rolled-up state, and with the biasing means including:

a second zipper for removably attaching the biasing means to the first zipper on the sheath housing; and

a spring having a predetermined length relative to at least a predetermined extendable length of the flexible material portion; and

affixing means for affixing the flexible material portion in the extended state to the structure, wherein the affixing means is selected from the group consisting of:

- a) a second hook-and-pile fastener system;
- b) a second hook system;
- c) a second button system;
- d) a material tying fastener;
- e) a clip;
- f) a magnet; and
- g) a zipper.

40. (new) The retractable cover of claim 39, wherein the sheath housing is sewn onto the flexible material portion.

41. (new) The retractable cover of claim 39, wherein the zipper of the biasing means is a constant force spring.

42. (new) The retractable cover of claim 39, wherein the zipper of the biasing means is a variable force spring.

43. (new) The retractable cover of claim 42, wherein a retraction force of the variable force spring can be selected from a range of about 0.25 kg to about at least 50 kg as determined by one or more of at least the weight of the flexible material portion, the dimensions of the flexible material portion, and the structure to be covered.

44. (new) A retractable cover for covering a structure having first securing means, the retractable cover comprising:

a flexible material portion including:

a sheath housing forming a sheath; and

a first zipper disposed on the sheath housing;

second securing means for securing the flexible material portion to the first securing means of the structure, with both of the first and second securing means being complementary and selected from the group consisting of:

a) stitching for sewing the flexible material to a portion of the structure;

b) a first hook system;

c) a first hook-and-pile fastener system;

d) a dome system;

e) a first buttoned system;

f) a screw;

g) a pin;

h) adhesive; and

i) welding;

biasing means positioned along an extendable length of the flexible material portion and disposed within the sheath, with the biasing means accessible in the sheath, with the biasing means retracting the flexible material portion from an extended state to a rolled-up state, and with the biasing means including:

a second zipper for removably attaching the biasing means to the first zipper on the sheath housing; and

a spring having a predetermined length relative to at least a predetermined extendable length of the flexible material portion; and

affixing means for affixing the flexible material portion in the extended state to the structure, wherein the affixing means is selected from the group consisting of:

- a) a second hook-and-pile fastener system;
- b) a second hook system;
- c) a second button system;
- d) a material tying fastener;
- e) a clip;
- f) a magnet; and
- g) a zipper.

45. (new) The retractable cover of claim 44, wherein the sheath housing is sewn onto the flexible material portion.

46. (new) The retractable cover of claim 44, wherein the zipper of the biasing means is a constant force spring.

47. (new) The retractable cover of claim 44, wherein the zipper of the biasing means is a variable force spring.

48. (new) The retractable cover of claim 47, wherein a retraction force of the variable force spring can be selected from a range of about 0.25 kg to about at least 50 kg as determined by one or more of at least the weight of the flexible material portion, the dimensions of the flexible material portion, and the structure to be covered.

49. (new) A method for covering a structure, the method comprising the steps of:

- securing a flexible material portion to a structure using securing means;
- extending the flexible material portion from a rolled-up state to an extended state to cover the structure;
- affixing the flexible material portion in the extended state using affixing means;
- biasing the flexible material portion using biasing means; and
- retracting the flexible material portion from the extended state to the rolled-up state using the biasing means;

wherein the flexible material portion includes:

- a sheath housing forming a sheath; and
- a first zipper disposed on the sheath housing;

wherein the securing means is selected from the group consisting of:

- a) stitching for sewing the flexible material portion to the structure;

- b) a first hook system;
- c) a first hook-and-pile fastener system;
- d) a dome system;
- e) a first buttoned system;
- f) a screw;
- g) a pin;
- h) adhesive; and
- i) welding;

wherein the biasing means is positioned along an extendable length of the flexible material portion and disposed within the sheath, with the biasing means accessible in the sheath, with the biasing means retracting the flexible material portion from an extended state to a rolled-up state, and with the biasing means including:

a second zipper for removably attaching the biasing means to the first zipper on the sheath housing; and

a spring having a predetermined length relative to at least a predetermined extendable length of the flexible material portion; and

wherein the affixing means is selected from the group consisting of:

- a) a second hook-and-pile fastener system;
- b) a second hook system;
- c) a second button system;
- d) a material tying fastener;
- e) a clip;
- f) a magnet; and

g) a zipper.

50. (new) The method of claim 49, wherein the sheath housing is sewn onto the flexible material portion.

51. (new) The method of claim 49, wherein the zipper of the biasing means is a constant force spring.

52. (new) The method of claim 49, wherein the zipper of the biasing means is a variable force spring.

53. (new) The method of claim 52, wherein a retraction force of the variable force spring can be selected from a range of about 0.25 kg to about at least 50 kg as determined by one or more of at least the weight of the flexible material portion, the dimensions of the flexible material portion, and the structure to be covered.